



North Atlantic Division RBC Newsletter

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Regional Command Council and Management Board meet in Norfolk Leading change through regional transformation

By Carolyn Jackson, Baltimore District Executive Leadership Development Program Candidate (input from ELDP Candidates)

More than 30 leaders from across the North Atlantic Division gathered in Portsmouth, Va., Jan. 22-25 to discuss a broad range of issues, from near-term items like regionally managing workload to a long-term vision of where NAD is heading as a region.

The 3-day combined Command Council and Regional Management Board conference, hosted by Norfolk District, focused on 'Leading Change through Regional Transformation'.

During a break-out session at the beginning of the conference, Mr. Mohan Singh, Regional Business Director for NAD, asked attendees to consider what the right balance is between centralization and regionalization. "That debate is shaping up right now," Singh said. "How do you create capacity in your organization to do your normal work and also be prepared to support the Global War on Terror and disasters like Katrina?"

The topic of centralization surfaced often during the conference, most notably during a lively discussion of the transition of the Contracting function to a national asset. Several district commanders expressed concern about their ability to effectively manage their programs when forced to rely heavily on assets that do not report

directly to them in order to accomplish core functions.

"What is the right balance?" asked NAD Commander Brig. Gen. Todd Semonite. "When you individually look at a function (to centralize) it might make sense, but taken together, the erosion of the team begins to be a big deal."



Mr. Mohan Singh, NAD Regional Business Director, discusses the steps in implementing NSPS.

PHOTO: Gerry Rogers, Norfolk District

Mr. Lloyd Caldwell, Director of Programs for NAD, discussed additional challenges facing the Division during the break-out session.

"First, with the BRAC challenge, we have an unprecedented workload coming," he said.

To meet the BRAC challenge, Semonite approved a plan agreed upon by District leaders at the conference that will distribute the workload throughout the region; a project delivery team with members from each District will develop the milestones and way ahead.

Caldwell also listed the fluidity of the Civil Works program, the initiatives underway to manage the workload, the drive at the headquarters level to become more regional in engineering, design, and construction efforts, and the implementation of NSPS as issues that leaders across NAD need to meet head-on.

With so much competition for resources, Semonite said the Division needs a strategic plan that prioritizes effort so "we are able to put our resources – time and money – against something."

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Division employees join the National Security Personnel System

By Dawn Clappsy, NAD

The North Atlantic Division (NAD) converted about 350 employees to the National Security Personnel System (NSPS) during spiral 1.2 on January 21. These included various occupational groups of Supervisory Personnel throughout the region.

New missions, tactics, technology and the overall requirement to meet national security demands require a Human Resources system like NSPS that is able to support today's and future challenges. NSPS is part of the Army's vision of a human capital management system that facilitates high performance, flexibility, and efficiency while supporting the national defense mission. It includes flexible hiring procedures, streamlined position

classification, pay banding and pay-for-performance.

Various teams were established in each District and the Division HQ to assist with the NSPS conversion and implementation. There will be a "mock" pay pool in May for the spiral 1.2 employees who converted to NSPS to prepare for the September 30 end of the performance rating cycle. Pay Pool Panels are being established and Pay Pool members are receiving the appropriate training needed to conduct the mock pay pool. New Human Resource policies are being developed pertaining to: pay setting, pay pools, classification and many other new processes.

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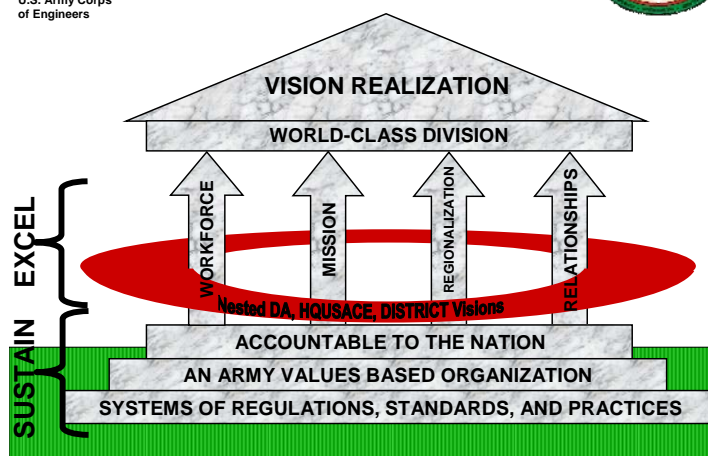
Transformation

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To that end, he unveiled an NAD Vision Implementation Plan that is nested in both the USACE and Army vision. The plan will serve as a way to implement specific goals and objectives under the four axes of workforce, mission, regionalization, and relationships. Under each axis, there are major goals and supporting objectives. These objectives are ranked from highest to lowest priority using a scale of “Essential, Important and Nice to Have.”



NAD Vision Model



In addition, the objectives are given a rating of green, amber, or red. The objectives ranked as ‘Essential’ and given a ‘Red’ rating are the items Semonite plans to aggressively resource to “buy out the red.”

“It is not human nature to work on areas that are red,” Semonite said. “We tend to want to keep working to make things that are good even better.”

The Vision, Semonite stressed, “should be the driver of everything we do. Priorities are what leaders resource. If everything is important, nothing’s important.”

District teams were asked to consider their goals and objectives and apply the same rating and ranking structure; this will be followed by a vision implementation session with Semonite in the coming months.

Semonite said he is not doing away with any current processes. However, he was adamant that NAD should be the most effective division in USACE, asking, “Are we a Division of choice? Is your District the one people want to sign up with? People vote with their feet – they’ll go where success is.”

Other items of interest during the conference include:

Mr. Mike Iarosis, Headquarters Regional Integration Team for Military Programs, said his team is developing a 45-minute

presentation on Military Programs processes to take to the districts in the upcoming months.

Mr. Paul Giovinco, RMB Executive Director, discussed a plan that would synchronize regional leadership developmental. Currently some districts have a multi-phase development program, along with a Division Executive Leadership Development Program. But there are differences among the district programs. The goal is that graduates from Phase 1 & 2 of each Leadership Development Program have the same skills regardless of district.

Ms. Dawn Clappsy, NAD Human Resources Officer, acknowledged that, “We are building the aircraft as we fly” in terms of implementing the National Security Personnel System. Singh recognized the need for patience, noting, “There is a lot of work in progress...it’s not a perfect system...but eventually, as we experience and grow into it, it will get better.” (see NSPS Story, page 1)

Mr. Edward Sim, project manager for Fort Drum, N.Y., discussed his team’s strategy for successfully using the Military Construction Transformation principles. His lessons learned included involving Fort Drum’s master planning group, working with the installation to reduce requirements, and partnering with industry to understand and address issues during non-bidding periods. Throughout the process, Sim kept the end-user in mind. With regard to a barracks project, Sim said, “If we deliver a product and save 35 percent, but the Soldier is freezing, we didn’t deliver the right product.”

Mr. Steve Dvorak, St. Louis District, gave a virtual presentation on P2 and Electronic Project Review Boards. He demonstrated two software programs that filter P2 and CEFMS information so that it can be easily analyzed by metrics including fiscal year, project phase and milestones. The RAZOR program filters CEFMS data into a Microsoft Excel pivot table. The programs do not require separate data entry – rather, they automatically extract P2 and CEFMS data so a project manager can easily see project information that is useful in managing assigned projects. New England District is moving forward with acquiring the data as a ‘test case’ for NAD.

Mr. Larry Petrosino, Civil Works Integration Division, NAD, discussed how civil works operations are affected by the year-long continuing resolution. Under the CR there will be no ‘new starts’ (projects, programs and activities not funded in FY06). However, work can continue on PCAs ongoing from FY06 and work originally scheduled for completion in FY07. There also is specific guidance for individual programs within Civil Works; execution of the FY07 Civil Works Program will require a lot of strategic planning with the region.

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Meeting the Belvoir BRAC Challenge: Borne out of necessity and a fresh way of thinking

By Terry McCann, Norfolk District

The challenge: To complete multiple BRAC and legacy design and construction projects valued at over \$3.4 billion on one installation (Fort Belvoir), while faced with an additional \$2.6 billion in project requirements within that same district.

In the beginning... a plea for help

It started during a Regional Management Board meeting with a plea for help from Baltimore District's Deputy for Program Management (DPM) Jim Jones to his counterparts in the other North Atlantic Division (NAD) districts. "We have a \$6 billion BRAC & Military Construction program within our district that we can use some help with."

Jones was not just asking for additional field engineers and technicians. "No, it was the 'management of bodies' that was the problem," Jones explained. The district didn't have the resources to enable them to do all the command, control and management functions critical to the success of these projects.

A shared perspective on the regional approach

"My initial reaction to Jim Jones' request for help was that I don't have the technical field resources to offer without impacting the BRAC and other projects that our district had responsibility for," said NAO DPM Jim Thomasson. "But when Jim (Jones) explained his challenges, it was a whole new paradigm for me and my counterparts. Command and Control is not normally a district helping district issue."

Gaining command and control for a project has always been a cause for celebration for the gaining districts that would "win" projects along with those responsibilities. "But this was far more significant than 'we're just getting a project'... it should not come across as 'we gained, they lost;' this is a regional approach to addressing a need," continued Thomasson.

So, what resulted from this new way of thinking?

The projects shared...

On Fort Belvoir, four NAD districts will share the \$3.4 billion in BRAC and MILCON projects. These include a \$500 million hospital (NAO); a \$1.1 billion WHS office building (NAN); a \$170 million museum (NAE); and a \$1.3 billion NGA facility (NAB) plus NAB's \$235 million in additional legacy MILCON, infrastructure/roads projects. At Aberdeen Proving Grounds, Md., NAP will build a C4ISR facility and NAB will handle its other MILCON and infrastructure/roads work. Both Europe and New England districts will provide technical/functional support to the various projects as needed.

The answer... a new organizational structure

To address the command and control needs of the overall Fort

Belvoir BRAC construction program, it's not as simple as districts working their individual projects independently. Resources need to be shared; scheduling must be coordinated; and ongoing communication with customers, external stakeholders and the host installation is critical. To accomplish this, the Belvoir Integration Office or BIO, will serve as a coordination "umbrella" over all of the Corps projects on the installation and to serve as a single point of contact for the garrison commander and staff. The BIO is expected to begin standing up in late March, reaching full operational capabilities by early July.

On Fort Belvoir, the districts will maintain full command responsibility for the execution of their respective projects. NAB, NAO and NAN will each establish Integrated Program Offices (IPO) to manage their individual project responsibilities. These IPOs will coordinate project management, engineering and construction, contracting, legal, and resource and personnel management for their respective projects.

Puts meaning into the concept of "Regionalization"

"I love it!" says Thomason. "All of a sudden, we've expanded the number of 0-6s (Colonels) and senior civilian leaders engaged on the Fort Belvoir work, including the four district commanders and four civilian deputies working together under the coordination umbrella of the division commander, Brig. Gen. Semonite."

Jim Jones views this transformation as the evolution of regional behavior, "doing things not because someone said we had to. "It's part cultural evolution and part that the projects just needed to be delivered," says Jones. "Previously, people's thinking was that something was stolen from us. But that's not the case now. Across organizational functions in our district, people began thinking we really need the help."

A program manager's perspective

NAB's acting Fort Belvoir Hospital Program Manager Dennis Pritchett agrees. He will transfer from NAB to NAO's hospital IPO as part of the BRAC transformation. "Sharing some of the Belvoir BRAC project workload with other districts was not only the smart thing to do, but it was the right thing to do," explains Pritchett. On transferring from NAB to NAO, "initially I was a little apprehensive," he says. "But I realize that it doesn't matter which district we work for; we are all dedicated to the same mission, taking care of our customer and taking care of our people."

The results have been immediate, says Jones. "Having the other DPMs be there to take on the various managerial requirements was a big load off our shoulders. It's also kind of fun, now, watching the client organizations who are accustomed to the districts always being in competition."

Transformation (continued from page 2)

Mr. John Bianco, Business Technical Division, NAD, gave a short presentation on NAD's Levee Safety Management Program. Within NAD there are 273 miles of levees that must be certified; 98 miles met the certification criteria. Districts are working closely with levee sponsors to ensure they understand what is required to receive certification. In some cases, sponsors need to provide additional information to inspection teams, in others, they must correct levee deficiencies. Sponsors have one year to take corrective action, after which their levees will become ineligible for federal rehabilitation assistance.

In his closing comments, Semonite noted the attendees covered a lot of ground in three days, and have a lot of work to accomplish in the months ahead. He shared a story of a Soldier on a rifle range, who, while concentrating on shooting targets that are right in front of him at 25-meters, must also take aim at the 300-meter targets so they don't advance and become issues.

"While you are being eaten by alligators, continue to work the depth – the long-term targets," he said.

The next RMB meeting is scheduled for March in Baltimore.

Presentations discussed in this article are available at: <https://rbc.nado.ds.usace.army.mil/RMB/RMB%20Current%20Year%20Minutes.htm>

NSPS (Continued from Page 1)

The next group of NAD individuals, the Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) workforce, will be converted to NSPS during spiral 1.3, which will take effect April 15.

There are many important protections and rights that are not changing under NSPS such as: merit system principles, rules against prohibited personnel practices, whistleblower protection, veteran's preference, benefits, anti-discrimination laws, fundamental due process, allowances and travel/subsistence expenses, training, leave and work schedules to name a few.

Success under NSPS is linked to how well an employee performs and how that performance contributes to the organization. Employees must understand their performance criteria and meet regularly with supervisors to discuss performance.

Management and the Human Resources team play a critical role in successfully implementing NSPS. However, employees play a "key" role as well. Everyone can assist with the transition to NSPS by staying up to date on information and by communicating with your Manager, Supervisor or Human Resources Advisor.

Your success under the NSPS is driven by your performance and contributions to the success of the organization. Additional information may be located on the NSPS website at: <http://www.cpms.osd.mil/nsps> or the Army Civilian Personnel On-Line website: www.cpol.army.mil

Your supervisor or your local Civilian Personnel Advisory Center (CPAC) Human Resources Specialist is available to assist with any questions.

Singh assigned to HQUSACE

By Lou Fioto, NAD

At the Winter Leaders Conference in early Feb, the Chief of Engineers announced that Mohan Singh, NAD's Regional Business Director, has been reassigned to the Corps Headquarters as Chief, Interagency and International Service Community of Practice, Directorate of Military Programs. He will also lead the NAD and GRD Regional Integration Teams (RITs). He will assume his new assignments on May 13, but will begin his transition on April 16.

"I have mixed emotions about this reassignment," Singh said. "I am sorry to leave one of the finest divisions in the Corps of Engineers, a division with a truly diverse and unique set of missions that span the globe. But I'm honored and tremendously excited to assume this new position, one which allows me to continue to serve the Corps and the Nation to my fullest capacities."

Singh, who entered the Senior Executive Service in 2000, joined NAD in May 2000 as the Director of Engineering and Technical Services and after 2012 implementation, he was assigned as the Regional Business Director. He has worked for the Corps since 1978, during which he has been involved in the design and construction of some of the Corps' most complex and unique projects, leading and managing major programs in the Middle East and Africa, and promulgation of master planning, design and construction policy for the Corps' worldwide mission at HQUSACE.

At press time, a successor had not been named.

"Even after being reassigned," Singh said, "I will still be attached to the division as the NAD RIT leader. I am proud of all the great work NAD does, of all the terrific people that make up the NAD team, and to be part of this great organization."

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